EVERLASTING LIFE

A CREED AND
A SPECULATION

WILLIAM W. KEEN, M.D.

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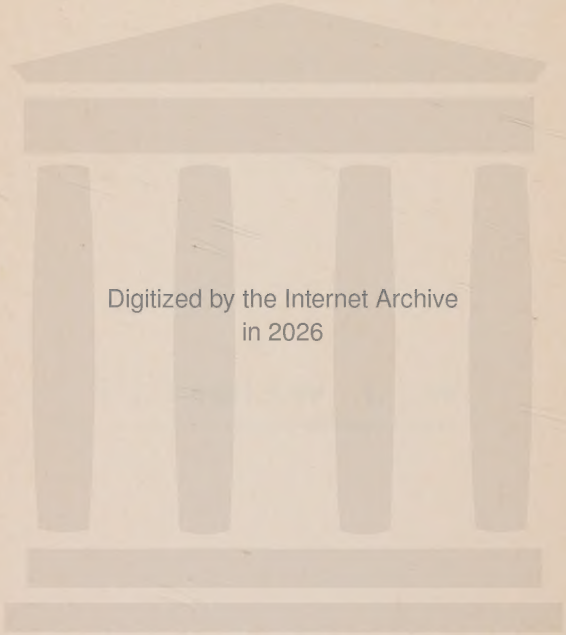

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EVERLASTING LIFE

A CREED AND A SPECULATION

By

W. W. KEEN, M.D., LL.D.

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PART I
INTRODUCTION

I

INTRODUCTION

I WAS born on January 19, 1837, at No. 232 South Third Street, Philadelphia, then wholly a residential district. Next to us to the north was the large lot extending, if I recollect rightly, all the way to Fourth Street, in which stood the Willing mansion. Many fine old forest trees still stood on that lot, and others in the rear of my father's dwelling which is still standing.

We attended the First Baptist Church, on what was then LaGrange Place, almost under the eaves of Christ Church. One of my very earliest recollections was walking to

church with my parents and brothers to the sound of the chimes of Christ Church.

We lived in the house referred to until April 5, 1843, when my father, who was not in good health, was advised by his physician to "go to the country." This was done by removing to the southwest corner of what is now 37th and Chestnut Streets, where the Presbyterian Church stands! It was really "country," as the streets were all grass, save where the horse and the wheels of the carriages had worn three bare grooves in the grass.

On Third Street my bed-room faced south, and, consequently, while lying in bed I could see the moon when it shone.

A certain William Miller, born in 1782, who had been figuring out the prophecies in the Bible as to the Second Coming of Christ had fixed the date about March 20, 1843, when I was over six years old. His views were very widely accepted and created great excitement, especially in religious circles. Many persons had made ready their white "Ascension Robes" and on the appointed day, gathered on various hills in their neighborhoods, ready to be caught up and meet the Lord. Many persons sold all their goods "for a song"; others even gave them away as they would have no further use for them. This "Second Advent" was to usher in the Millennium.

The public mind had been prepared for this outburst by certain unusual physical phenomena. On November 13, 1833, as my parents often told me, there was the most extraordinary exhibition of "falling" or "shooting" stars. The earth passed through an enormous number of fragments of cosmic matter which took fire in the upper atmosphere as a result of the friction from their great velocity. It began, to one observer, about half past 4 A.M. and lasted for nearly two hours. To the uninformed public it seemed as if all the stars had got loose and that universal chaos was about to return. The light was so bright that the hour could be read on a watch. "The sixth seal had been opened," said

some (Rev. VI, 12, 13). The simile of a fig tree "casting her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind" was most fitting. One person said that "he fixed his eye upon the morning star resolved, if *that* departed, he should give up all hope." Fortunately for him of course it "stood fast." Professor Olmstead, of Yale, said that "it was probably the greatest display of celestial fireworks that had ever been seen since the creation of the world."

In January, February and September, 1843, parhelia or "mock suns" appeared in the sky, and scared not a few timid souls who knew nothing of astronomy. Moreover, "the Great Comet of 1843" added to the general fright and nervousness. It

was so bright that it was seen by day even before it was visible by night. I well remember its bright head and its enormously long tail stretching far across the heavens. With the exception of the still greater and more magnificent comet of 1857, which I saw from the campus of Brown in my Junior Year, night after night, filling me with admiration and awe, the comet of 1843 was the most splendid celestial visitor seen for many many years.

I heard the discussions of this wonderful Second Coming, and they made a deep impression on my childish mind. I was almost "scared to death," for I was convinced that there was no hope for such a dreadful little sinner as I was, and the

Second Coming meant for me eternal damnation in a real Hell in real flames.

Whenever the moon was covered with clouds and these clouds thinned so that the silvery brightness of the moon began to shine through the thinning clouds, my vivid imagination convinced me that that brightness meant the immediate appearance of Christ at that very spot. I was terrified. At last the appointed day passed, and gradually I regained confidence; but I have never been able, after the lapse of even more than eighty years, to forget those frightful nights.

My parents, I am quite sure, did not believe this "Millerite" delusion, and I am also quite sure that

they did not have made any "Ascension Robes." [1]

I was brought up by them in the Orthodox "Faith of our Fathers" of that day — a real Heaven and a real Hell; that the whole world was made in six actual days of twenty-four hours each, in the year 4004 B. C., for so stood the record in black and white in all our Bibles, with the exact year of the Flood, etc.

I did not know that these dates were only the guess — and a totally erroneous guess — of Archbishop Usher, who lived three centuries ago, and knew nothing whatever of geology, anthropology, archeology,

[1] Most of the above details were already written when I found that a book *Days of Delusion*, by Clara Endicott Sears (Houghton Mifflin Co.), gives a full account of this delusion. I have added some of its facts.

etc., for they did not exist in his day, and astronomy was then only in an elementary stage. Nor did I appreciate the fact that these dates had been imposed upon us by the early printers. I assumed that they were a part of the Bible itself.

John Lightfoot, Vice Chancellor of Cambridge University (England), and a contemporary of Archbishop Usher, was even more exact than he, for he declared that the whole world was made by the Trinity on the 26th day of October, 4004 B. C., at 9 o'clock in the morning!

I believed in an actual conversation in intelligible speech in the Garden of Eden, when the Serpent persuaded Eve to eat of the fruit of the "Tree of Knowledge," and that

when God later talked with him, cowardly Adam shielded himself by throwing the blame upon the woman God had given him, and she in turn declared "the serpent beguiled me and I did eat" (Genesis III, 1–13).

I believed that the sun and moon did stand still (Joshua X, 12–14) for about a whole day at the command of Joshua, so that the slaughter of the Amorites might be completed. I believed that the Lord was justified in this and many other cruelties. When I say "believed" it was rather a passive than an actual belief. It never occurred to my mind that these stories *could* be really the legends of a primitive nomadic people, who had long been slaves in Egypt

and were probably below the level of the Bedouins of today. I took them all for granted.

As I grew older and my mind became more alert and inquiring, then things began to take on another aspect. Could God be so vengeful as to inflict the death penalty for so many sins and crimes as appeared in the Laws as they stood in the Pentateuch? Could He order the barbarous public stoning to death by the populace of a "stubborn and rebellious son," who was also "a glutton and a drunkard?" (Deut. XXI, 18–21).

Could we approve of the Psalmist when he wrote "By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down, yea we wept when we remembered Zion,"

and then quickly burst forth in a cry of vengeance "O daughter of Babylon who art to be destroyed, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones" (Ps. CXXXVII, 8, 9).

My mind in short passed precisely through the stages so well described by Bishop Lawrence in his admirable little book *Fifty Years*. "No discovery of science," [and what is science I ask but discovering and setting forth the correlation in orderly sequence of the works of Almighty God?] "no higher or lower criticism," says Bishop Lawrence, "has taken from us our faith in God, who is God the Father, God

revealed in His Son Jesus, God working through His Spirit; and when we realize how our conception of the universe has been enlarged ten thousand times, how the history of the planets, of this little world and of the upgrowth of man from lower animal forms to his divine estate, has opened wondrous revelations, we have a conception of God ten thousand times greater, nobler, and more spiritual than was that of our fathers." Not only did I pass through that anxious period of doubt but I finally emerged as he did into a broader, happier, sunny belief in the goodness, mercy and love of God, into a real, glorious belief in the Atonement by our divine Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,

who was "Son of God," and also "Son of Man."

"For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," is for me the crowning text of the whole Bible.

What a joy! What a comfort! What a support when sorrow came! What this wonderful declaration of the Apostle has been to me I can never fully express in words.

I am no theologian. I accept and try to interpret all passages in the Bible by all the other cognate biblical texts, and especially by any utterances of our Lord, Himself, verified, as far as possible, by the most exact scholarship.

Hence this little book with this glorious Christian Magna Charta. I pray God that its message may bring to many others the same comfort that it has brought to me.

1520 Spruce Street,
Philadelphia,
June, 1924.

PART II

THE CHRISTIAN MAGNA CHARTA

II

THE CHRISTIAN MAGNA CHARTA

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life."

St. John III, 16.

THIS, to me, is the most comforting verse in the entire Bible. See what it declares and what it necessarily implies.

1. The wonderful love of God for the Human Race, for He "gave his only begotten Son" for our salvation. God thought us worth such a shining sacrifice! Love is the great controlling motive force of the world, neither Science nor Law, nor Literature can compete with it. It is the

one Supreme Emotion. It reaches its highest expression in the ineffable love of God for mankind as shown in our motto.

2. The Divinity of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus the Christ, the "Son of God." Jesus, Himself, many, many times claimed God as "His Father."

"Say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, 'Thou blasphemest' because I said, 'I am the Son of God?'" (St. John X, 36) was a similar assertion by our Lord Himself. Again, when Peter answered our Lord's question "Who say ye that I am?" and declared "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed art thou, Simon

Bar Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven" (St. Matt. XVI, 13–17).

Moreover, Jesus allowed himself to be *worshipped*! Thus, he said to the blind man whom he had healed, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is He Lord, that I might believe on Him? And, Jesus said unto him thou hast both seen Him and it is He that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him" (St. John IX, 35–38).

This was not a solitary instance in which Jesus accepted and approved of His being worshipped, for we read:

"And behold there came a leper and worshipped Him, saying 'Lord if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean.' And Jesus put forth His hand and touched Him saying 'Be thou clean.' And immediately his leprosy was cleansed" (St. Matt. VIII, 2, 3).

When Peter essayed to walk on the water and Jesus stilled the wind "They that were in the ship [several of His disciples] came and worshipped Him saying 'of a truth Thou art the Son of God'" (St. Matt. XIV, 33).

When a woman of Canaan besought our Lord to heal her daughter, He at first repulsed her. "Then came she and worshipped Him" (St. Matt. XV, 25).

And in St. Mark (V, 6), the maniac from among the tombs, "when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped Him."

After His resurrection it is twice recorded that He was worshipped by His disciples (St. Matt. XXVIII, 9). "Jesus met them [the two Marys] saying, 'All hail.' And they came and held Him by the feet and worshipped Him." And again (Verse 17), "When they [the eleven disciples] saw Him, they worshipped Him."

And Jesus *allowed* these various persons to worship Him! How differently Peter acted when the Centurion "met him and fell down at his feet and worshipped him; but Peter took him up, saying, 'Stand

up! I, myself, also am a man!'" (Acts X, 25–26).

For our Lord to be really divine and yet to be ignorant of that wonderful fact is an absolute contradiction in terms. Divinity pre-supposes omniscience. If He was *not* divine, no greater sacrilege can be imagined than for Him to allow adoration which was not His due. His entire life is the strongest negation of His acceptance of such unwarranted worship, if He were not divine.

Note also His majestic declaration, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I AM" (St. John VIII, 58).

3. The brief, but all-sufficient creed, "Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlast-

ing life." Clearly, "believing in Him" implies accepting Him as our Divine Saviour and model, infusing His spirit into our own lives, obeying His precepts and loving Him supremely.

When the jailer came trembling to Paul and Silas and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in the house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his; straightway" (Acts XVI, 29–33). Nothing else was exacted from him and his household save the above sole, brief creed.

So, too, when the Ethiopian eunuch asked Philip, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip replied, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." Whereupon the eunuch said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts VIII, 36, 37, 38), and forwith he, also, was baptized.

Dare we demand more than this all-sufficient biblical Apostolic Creed?[1] What is sufficient for the Apostles John, and Paul and Philip and for Silas should surely be sufficient for all Christians.

Jesus had no need of special proof that He was "the Son of Man," for

[1] No Apostle had any personal relation to the miscalled "Apostles' Creed" used in various liturgies. This creed dates from about the fourth century (Encyc. Britan., 11th Ed., "Creeds").

his physical presence was sufficient. His pre-natal life clearly was physiologically normal (St. Luke II, 6). In Nazareth He grew up as a healthy boy, though filled with unusual wisdom. As a man He ate and drank, became weary, required sleep, indulged in special friendships, and mourned the death of Lazarus. He was also "touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. IV, 15).

4. There is no demand in this creed for belief in a miraculous birth. I can, therefore, take the hand of my brother who believes in His supernatural birth, and also the hand of my brother who believes in His natural birth, for I find nothing to

warrant my demanding *any* declaration save that Jesus Christ is the "Son of God."

Belief in the Virgin birth is certainly not made essential to salvation in our Christian Magna Charta. Nor is the belief in the Virgin birth made essential to salvation anywhere else in the New Testament, so far as I know. Neither Jesus, Himself, nor His brothers or sisters, nor any of the Apostles ever alluded to any peculiarity of His birth.

St. Luke (II, 41) records that "*His parents* went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover," and later, when they returned to Jerusalem, and after three days' search found Him in the temple "in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and ask-

ing them questions," His mother, herself, surely the best possible authority, chided him saying, "Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? Behold *Thy father and I* have sought Thee sorrowing" (St. Luke II, 46–48).

Two Evangelists record the birth of Jesus (St. Matt. I, 18–25; St. Luke I, 26–35 and II, 1–7). St. Matthew positively asserts the Virgin Birth and St. Luke infers it. They are also the only two who recite the genealogy of our Lord (St. Matthew I, 1–16; St. Luke III, 23–38). And they both trace the lineal descent of our Lord from King David through Joseph, His father, though both with a certain qualification, for St. Matthew says (I, 16): "and Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was

born Jesus who is called Christ." And St. Luke says (III, 23): "being (as was supposed) the Son of Joseph." When Philip, the Apostle, found Nathanael, he said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph" (St. John I, 45).

St. Paul was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and almost may be described as the legal adviser of the early Christian churches. He seems to have been totally ignorant of any peculiar sanctity attending the birth of Jesus, for if he knew it, it is almost unbelievable that he would not have published it abroad. On the contrary, in his written Epistle to the Romans, Paul alludes to the descent of Jesus from David through

the normal, human paternity of Joseph as if it were an accepted and unquestioned fact. Read the first four verses of this Epistle, as follows:

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle, separated unto the gospel of God (which he had promised afore by His Prophets in the Holy Scriptures), concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

Further on he writes (Rom. VIII, 3): "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." And again in II Tim. II, 8, Paul writes: "Remember that Jesus Christ of the

seed of David was raised from the dead." In the Epistle to the Hebrews (II, 16-17) we read, "For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but he took on Him the seed of Abraham [*i.e.* of David]. Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren." And again (Hebrews VII, 14), "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda."

The populace repeatedly called Him "Son of David," which is equivalent, by both the recorded genealogies, to saying, "Son of Joseph." Thus the two blind men repeatedly cried out, "Have mercy upon us, O Lord, Thou Son of David" (St. Matthew XX, 30, 31). "And all [in the Synagogue] bare Him witness

and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's Son?" (St. Luke IV, 22). "And they [the Jews] said, Is not this Jesus the Son of Joseph whose father and mother we know?" (St. John VI, 42).

"And the multitudes that went before Him and that followed [in his triumphal entry into Jerusalem] cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David" (St. Matthew XXI, 9). "And when the chief priests and scribes saw . . . the children crying in the Temple and saying, 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' they were displeased" (St. Matthew XXI, 15, 16). Note, too, that Jesus not once corrected them when they called Him the "Son of David." On the contrary, when the

chief priests and scribes "said unto Him, 'Hearest Thou what these [children] say?'" Jesus replied, "Yea, have ye never read 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?'" thus distinctly approving their calling Him the "Son of David." Again, in the Revelation of St. John (XXII, 16) the text reads, "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel [*i. e.* messenger] to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David and the bright and morning star."

Calling Jesus the "Son of David" implies the actual paternity of Joseph, as stated in both of the genealogies. Our Lord's own approval of the Hosannas of the people, and espe-

cially his words approving of the children's Hosannas, just quoted, imply the paternity of Joseph and the statement quoted from St. John's Revelation asserts the same, if the text is admittedly correct, as I suppose is the case.

THE ALMIGHTY SURELY COULD IMPART HIS DIVINE NATURE AT ANY PERIOD DURING THE PRE-NATAL LIFE OF OUR LORD, AFTER IT HAD BEGUN IN THE NORMAL, HUMAN MANNER, JUST AS READILY AS HE COULD INITIATE THE GROWTH OF HIS HUMAN BODY AND IMPART HIS DIVINE NATURE AT THE VERY THRESHOLD OF THAT WONDERFUL LIFE, WITHOUT THE INTERPOSITION OF A HUMAN FATHER. EITHER MODE IS A WONDERFUL INCOMPREHENSIBLE MYSTERY.

When I study the development of simple, animal life from its first

glimmer to its full fruition, even in the egg of so lowly an animal as the chick, I stand in awe of the wonderful, orderly complexity of what Nature—that is to say, Almighty God—accomplishes every day. How much more true this is, then, of the growth and birth of every human being.

Every animal, including man, begins life as a single cell, about the $\frac{1}{125}$ of an inch in diameter. When fertilized, it begins at once to increase in number—two, four, eight, sixteen, etc. After a time these rapidly multiplying cells begin to differentiate and give rise to bones, muscles, the internal organs, such as the heart and lungs in the chest, the digestive tube, the liver, the kidneys, etc., in

the abdomen, all different in structure and function as are all these that follow. A most wonderful, central nervous system develops (the spinal cord and its expansion — the brain), with nerves reaching to all parts of the body. The eye and ear begin very early to develop into extraordinarily complicated organs. The retina, alone, thin as it is, has ten different layers, each easily identified by the microscope. Then there are also in the eye blood vessels in abundance; muscular tissue with which to focus for different distances by acting on the lens itself; the iris, the colored, circular, muscular curtain with the little, central, black opening—the pupil—which widens or contracts to regulate automati-

cally the amount of light impinging on the retina. The ear vies with the eye as a most complicated organ. All these many and different tissues and organs gradually develop co-ordinately, no one too rapidly, no one too slowly, during the months of pre-natal life, almost without exception in a normal way, and are ready for complete or partial use at birth, and to continue their development up to adult life.

Think of the personal experience of, let us say, a citizen of New York or London, or of any other great city. Compute, if you can, how many human beings this one citizen, in say forty, fifty or sixty years of life, has seen in the streets; in great religious, musical and other gatherings; in po-

litical, military and other parades; the multitudes he has seen at the seashore; during his travels at home and abroad; and yet how few—how *very* few—of these multitudes were born with club foot, cleft palate, or hare lip! How few were born deaf, blind or idiotic! I doubt if the average man would have seen over one hundred in his whole life, and very possibly less than one hundred.

The animal body, and especially the human body, is the most marvelous organism the human mind can conceive of! It never has a holiday. It never can cease to work without ceasing to exist, and it must make all its own repairs while working at full speed. The blood alone in the average adult human body contains

about ten thousand, two hundred and forty billions (10,240,000,000,000) of red blood cells, vast numbers of which are used up and replaced every day! How wonderful that these and the other uncountable billions upon billions of cells in all the rest of the tissues and organs can possibly live together in harmonious normal development, with such rare exceptions. In all the rush and hurly-burly of the billions and billions of cells in each human body, each cell falls into line in its appropriate place and at the appropriate time, and make of all these thousands, or very likely millions of persons, seen by any one person, normal human beings, excepting the few abnormal ones any one may have seen!

Again, the brain of a child at birth contains about nine thousand, two hundred million (9,200,000,000) cells! Strange to say there are strong reasons for believing that this is the total equipment for our whole life, no new ones ever being added to this number. How wonderful and almost unbelievable it is that, of this huge number of cells practically in every brain, the motor cells controlling every muscle of the face, the trunk, each segment of the arm (shoulder, arm, forearm, hand, thumb), and each corresponding segment of the lower extremity, finally locate themselves in exactly the *same area* on the surface of every brain. So exact is this localization that we safely depend upon it in

making our diagnoses. In all of the many cases I have operated upon, there has never been one in which I have been misled by finding any deviation from the normal pattern!

How exact this localization is, is well shown in one of my cases. I wished temporarily to paralyze a young woman's *right* thumb. I exposed her brain on the *left* side, identified the area in which the motor cells controlling all the muscles of the thumb ought to be found, and removed a cube of the gray matter about one-quarter of an inch in size. Now there are nine muscles which move the thumb. They are placed in the ball of the thumb, on the back and on the front of the forearm. When she recovered from

the ether, all of these nine muscles were absolutely paralyzed and not another muscle! Within a few months she could sew as usual and her disease (epilepsy) was almost entirely cured.

Is not God's work, His machinery of life, a marvel of smooth working efficiency? No human device can be compared with it for a moment.

Amidst all this complex clashing of an almost infinite number of cells, each, so to speak, struggling to get to its appropriate place, the wonder is not that the vast majority of people are developed and born *without* serious imperfections. The wonder is rather that most of us are not born *with* glaring defects. If God's laws avert such multitudinous chances of

irregular development, I again emphasize my conviction that it is surely equally within the power of the Almighty (A) to initiate the development of our Lord's human body by divine interposition at its very commencement, or (B) to confer the divine nature upon that human body, at any later period of prenatal life, after it had been begun in the normal, human manner.

To my mind, when I ponder on all these facts, I am impressed with the reality of the Presence of God in our lives—in every day of our lives. Truly "in Him we live and move and have our Being." The wonderful complexity of life which I have tried to set forth as simply as I could, especially in the development of our

body in pre-natal life, is supplemented during all the rest of our lives, after our birth, in an equally wonderful manner. Every breath we draw, every pulsation of our hearts, every movement of our bodies, nay, even every thought of our minds require adjustment of brain and blood, of nutrition and secretion, in the greater or less supply of energy from what are called the endocrine glands, regulated not by our will but by the automatic action of that part of the nervous system over which we have no control, but which often saves us from our bodily sins even in spite of ourselves.

Nature—that again is only another name for our maker, God—is always our guardian, our watchful

governor — our loving Father in Heaven.

And when we rise from the merely animal functions of life to the mental, the moral, the spiritual functions — the acquisition of knowledge, the development of our moral sense, and above all of our spiritual and religious natures, well may we be astonished and fervently thank God every day for His loving care, His gracious presence, His wonderful provision, not only for our mortal lives, but for the promised glorious Immortality of our Christian Magna Charta.

Yet because all this is so familiar we rarely think of what God hath wrought in every animal and every human being who has ever lived. On

the other hand so delicately are our bodies organized that a single drop of fluid, poisoned by the germs of such diseases as tetanus, typhoid fever or tuberculosis, often destroys the whole organism.

As I look at it, each individual Christian is entitled to choose, as to the birth of Jesus Christ, which alternative he can best believe. And as belief in the Virgin birth is not imperative for salvation, he is also at liberty to hold his judgment in suspense, awaiting the fuller, glorious revelations which will come to us in the future life.

In the case of our Lord, not the development and birth of His physical body, but the *Incarnation*—the

union of His divine and human natures, so that He is both "Son of God" and "Son of Man," is to me the one great fundamental, pivotal fact, which I gladly accept. It is also a fact which I can neither explain nor understand, but I fully expect to understand it in the future life.

5. The Atonement also is clearly stated, "Whosoever believeth . . . should not perish, but have Everlasting Life."

I am not concerned over the various *human theories* of the Atonement. That problem again belongs to God. But I profoundly believe the *fact* of the Atonement and bless God for it every day. I do not pretend to understand it but, as in the case of the Incarnation, I gladly

accept it and believe that hereafter in the future life it will surely be made clear to me. Faith is as much a normal function of the human mind as is logic. Poetry most reverently expresses it:

"Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove."

What warrant have I then to refuse to recognize as a Christian any one who believes or disbelieves in the Virgin birth, or who believes or disbelieves in any human theory of the Atonement, provided he accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as the "Son of God," and his own divine Saviour?

6. As to the Millennium: I seriously doubt whether there will ever

be such an event. The Book of Revelation is the most wonderful yet also the most mystical and obscure book in the whole Bible. The passage (Rev. XX, 2–10) is the only place in the Bible in which the Millennium is mentioned. Therefore I quote the whole of the description. Read it carefully.

"And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them,

and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan

shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

The whole passage seems to me to be not literal but figurative.

Frankly, I cannot understand it. If it should be interpreted literally is it not strange that neither Jesus, Himself, nor any Apostle nor other biblical writer ever alluded to such an overwhelming event as the Millennium for the whole human race then living and also for the dead? Whether it will ever occur or not I believe is wholly in God's hands. To make belief in a pre- or post-millennial coming of our Lord a "Fundamental" of our religion is a monstrous wrong. We know from the Bible that the early Christians believed that the Second Advent was impending, and we know historically that it has not materialized for almost nineteen centuries since the Crucifixion and the Resur-

rection. Our clear duty then is to be ready at all times in case the Lord should come during our earthly life.

7. In this wonderful verse I find the amplest promise of Immortality. "Whosoever believeth . . . should not perish, but have—" What?—Listen!—"*Everlasting Life!*"

And, further, what did our Lord promise to the repentant, dying robber on the cross? "Verily I say unto thee, *today* shalt thou be with me in *Paradise*" (St. Luke XXIII, 43). And, again, "Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought Life and *Immortality* to light through the Gospel" (II. Tim. I, 10). And yet further: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this

mortal must put on *Immortality*" (I. Cor. XV, 53).

Life then does *not* cease at death, but continues into the other world. What a glorious consolation! We shall then spend that "Everlasting Life" with our dear Lord and Master. We shall also meet again the dear ones who have preceded us, and in time those who shall follow us, and spend this "Everlasting Life" with them. This assurance of Immortality, and of these precious reunions, is an ever-present joy to my soul.

PART III

HOW SHALL WE SPEND OUR TIME IN HEAVEN?—A SPECULATION

III

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I HAVE many friends, I am glad to say, and, therefore, a large correspondence. Surgery I know fairly well, and have witnessed and taken some part in its wonderful development in the last sixty odd years. Of other sciences, I have a very limited knowledge but I am constantly increasing that knowledge through correspondence, reading scientific publications, and by personal touch with these many friends. My mental attitude is eager and receptive.

When I get an inspiring letter from Dr. George E. Hale, the remarkable

head of the Mt. Wilson Solar Observatory, at Pasadena, telling me of his researches on the sun as a great magnet; or that the great 100 inch telescope promises to reveal over 500,000,000 new stars, each a sun far greater than our own, but never before seen by a human eye, I find myself wishing that I had been an astronomer.

When I read that brilliant and suggestive address of Sir Ernest Rutherford (President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science for 1923), on the electrical constitution of matter (*British Medical Journal*, September 15, 1923), I am sorry that I am not a physicist.

When I converse or correspond with an eminent chemist I think that

no other science has an equal authority or a greater prospect of adding to knowledge.

When, as recently, I spend a morning with Sir Arthur Keith, the incomparable Curator of the Hunterian Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons in London, and am shown the treasures there collected for study, or read his lectures tracing the gradual and far-reaching alterations in almost every organ in the human body, as a result of the change from the four-footed posture of our long distant ancestors to the erect posture of man (*British Medical Journal*, May 17, 1923, p. 451, *ff.*), I am bewitched by the secrets disclosed by the study of Comparative Anatomy and Anthropology.

When I read a fundamental mathematical paper—I revelled in mathematics for three years at Brown—I am persuaded that mathematics is the only exact science and is the foundation of all the others.

And so I might go on with other sciences in turn.

In contemplating the extraordinary attraction of these sciences, a further thought has presented itself to my mind.

"How shall we spend our time in Heaven?"

Doubtless, first of all, in the ardent, reverent worship of Almighty God. But, though our manifold blessings and mercies will demand constant praise, and the rapt expression of our

gratitude, I can hardly believe that this will be our sole occupation.

I have no doubt about our joyous reunion with the dear ones who have preceded us and of our recognition of each other.

On the Mount of the Transfiguration the Disciples recognized Moses and Elias (St. Matt. XVII, St. Mark IX); and in the story of Lazarus (St. Luke XVI, 19–31), the rich man in Hell recognized Abraham and Lazarus in Heaven; and again in St. Luke XIII, 24–28, we read: "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."

Yet on earth none of these persons had ever seen Abraham, Isaac or Jacob, or any of the prophets.

How thrilling will be the disclosures our loved ones will make to us of their abounding happiness. What a blissful welcome we shall receive from them! Most likely, I think they will know all that has happened to us since they left us.

They may recall to us the cup of cold water given to a little one, the long-forgotten deeds of kindness to some sad and weary fellow mortals, when we have lifted heavy burdens from body and mind. How that will fill to the brim our cup of joy!

Moreover, we shall enjoy the company of the angels themselves, and learn how they, too, have served

the Lord God, not only in music and song, in which we may well join, but in carrying messages of cheer to discouraged pilgrims on their way to the Heavenly City, pointing out to them that their thorny path leads eventually to the "Delectable Mountains!" Then we shall understand the mystery of the Incarnation and of the Atonement; why sin and suffering were allowed to exist in our earthly life; why the inexplicable inequalities, which we so constantly saw during our earthly life, were permitted to exist. We shall then see clearly that God was good and just and that all our earthly problems were parts of the wonderful drama of human redemption.

To the dear ones who have pre-

ceded us to Heaven even the sorrows which have befallen us, and the errors and sins which we ourselves have committed on earth, may clearly fall in line as possibly a method of discipline by which our characters were formed, our trust in God strengthened, and the need of help from on High in our daily lives confirmed. Thus our very sorrows and sins may be far from a cause of sorrow to them. Or possibly, as a gifted friend of mine has ingeniously suggested, an analogy may be found in the recent astonishing radio developments. He writes: "The atmosphere around us, we have learned, is full of voices, but we only hear those to which our ears are in some way attuned. Might it be, I wonder, that

only those things in human experience which attain a certain spiritual level would reach the consciousness of those who have passed into the land of bliss, while they would remain quite unconscious of everything upon a lower level?" (Rev. Dr. Alexander MacColl.)

When I envisage such joys, I am entranced and ready to sing my *Nunc dimittis*.

I suppose it is fair to assume that we shall not attain to complete knowledge at once, but that we shall begin in Heaven at about the point at which we left off on earth.

It seems reasonable to assume, also, that our mental development will be progressive; though, because of our new and unparalleled opportunities,

we shall advance in knowledge far more swiftly than was possible during our earthly life. The physical obstacles which retard, and in many cases prevent, our progress in knowledge on earth surely will not exist in Heaven.

What is laboriously discovered here by the archeologist's spade, the geologist's hammer, the papyrus and the palimpsest, we may easily, quickly and accurately learn in our new world.

All the sciences in succession may become our own possession. We may trace the Universe back to the primordial Chaos, and see the ordered Cosmos evolved during aeons of time. We may learn the whole drama of Creation and the

subsequent development of life in plant and animal and man. We may learn the slow development of civilization among the primitive inhabitants of the earth. History, so often erroneously revealed to us on earth by the conflicting and inaccurate records of motives and acts, may then be accurately disclosed. Other intellectual fields—the literature of all nations, may become ours by easy conquest.

What has happened in other worlds may be gradually unfolded to us in a grand panorama of the entire Universe.

In the world of the infinitely great we may penetrate, therefore, far beyond the reach of the most powerful telescope or spectroscope. If any

other worlds are inhabited we may learn the story of their creation, their later social, intellectual, political and religious development.

In the world of the infinitely little we may see beyond the most powerful microscope; far beyond the physicist's study of the atom and the electron; far beyond the balance and the test tube of the chemist.

With what wonder we shall thus find revealed to us the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of the God of the whole Universe, "who gave [for mankind] His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life."

Then there will be no more quarrels, discords and jealousies; no

more theological differences of opinion, for we shall know Him as He is, and we may hope to comprehend His works far more clearly than we can in this world.

"In my Father's house are many mansions," said our Lord. May it not be that there shall exist a heavenly architecture instead of our earthly "Castles in Spain?" The Heavenly City may be more than a figure of speech. In the Revelation of St. John (Chapter XXI), the apostle describes his vision of "the new heaven and the new earth," and more especially of "that great city, the holy Jerusalem."

The whole account is pre-eminently Oriental in its poetical language, in giving magnificence to the

description by huge dimensions and impossible exaggerations. The key-note is the constantly recurring number twelve. For instance, there are the names of the twelve Apostles and of the twelve Tribes on the gates and the foundations. The wall of the city was 144 cubits high (12 times 12), almost 80 yards, with twelve foundations garnished with precious and semi-precious stones. It had twelve gates, each a single, gigantic pearl. The city was four square, twelve thousand furlongs in length and in breadth. Taking the furlong at one-eighth of a mile, each side measured 1500 miles! And it is expressly stated (verse 16) that "the length and the breadth and the *height* of it are equal," that is that the city

was 1500 miles high! Its streets were of "pure gold as it were transparent glass." There was a pure river of the water of Life flowing through the city and on its borders were "trees of life bearing twelve manner of fruits," a different one for each of the twelve months, and the "leaves were for the healing of the nations." No explanation is given why, apparently, sickness should exist and require "healing."

To take such a description literally would be absurd. It is only the Oriental way of declaring the exceptional or surpassing magnificence of the Holy City.

We pragmatical, Occidental people, people of inches and millimeters, of pints and pounds, are apt to forget

that the Bible, especially the Old Testament and the Book of Revelation, is of Oriental origin, saturated with poetic forms of speech, with parables, with the expression of vivid emotions. That is what has made it for Jews and Christians alike a precious Manual of Devotion for over twenty centuries. When our Lord said (St. Matt. XXI, 21), "Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith and doubt not . . . if ye shall say unto this mountain, 'Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea,' it shall be done," He well knew that His audience would take it, not as a literal assertion, but the Oriental way of saying, "Expect great things of God in answer to earnest believing prayer."

Though Oriental in origin and style, yet blessed be God its inspired content, especially that of the New Testament is of universal application. We Gentiles especially share its glorious promises as St. Peter (Acts X, 1–48) learned when in prayer on the housetop, and as especially set forth by St. Paul the "Apostle to the Gentiles." Still further the gracious message is for the whole human race for "*whosoever* believeth in Him shall not perish, but have Everlasting Life."

All that I have thus far written takes Immortality for granted. In my preceding essay, entitled "The Christian Magna Charta," and in the verse of Scripture, which is its motto, I have given what is to me

an all-sufficient evidence of Immortality. But Immortality is also, to my mind, a logical necessity.

I have seen a most complicated spectroscope which can reach to stars and nebulae so far distant that light, travelling 186,000 miles a second, takes over a million years to reach the human eye. Yet that wonderful instrument will tell you what chemical elements—hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, iron, helium, and all the rest—compose that far, far away body.

Recently, Professor Millikan, of the California Institute of Technology, that wizard of the Atom, by "hot spark" spectroscopy has been able to take atoms to pieces. Through creating these "hot sparks"

in extreme vacuum he can "strip in succession one, two, three, four, five or six of the outer electrons," and all of these stripped-off electrons are exactly alike! He has given experimental proof of the accuracy of these statements! (*Science*, May 30, 1924.) By demonstrating the central nucleus of an atom and its encircling electrons, which constitute a system very similar to our sun and its planets, there has been formulated what is well called "The Astronomy of the Atom." Yet only a few years ago we thought the atom was the smallest possible particle of matter—"indivisible" as its very name means.

I have seen a balance so sensitive that the heat from the human

body, at a distance of twenty feet it unobstructed would destroy its accuracy. It is, therefore, enclosed in a room twenty feet long, the end opposite to the balance being of glass. To see the little figures on the arms of the balance, indicating the weight, a telescope has to be used. To adjust the final, exact weight, a tiny bit of the finest wire, lighter than a hair, is moved to and fro by a rod twenty feet long reaching to the balance. What a marvel of accuracy!

Suppose that the maker of that spectroscope, or the maker of that balance, when it had been used but a month or a year, had deliberately battered it into fragments, would we not call him a lunatic? And shall God be less wise than a man? To

develop a Shakespeare, a Newton, a Luther or a Wesley, a Washington or a Lincoln, and then by death to annihilate those wonderful minds, would be worse than to destroy a material thing like a spectroscope or a balance. Hence, I argue that Everlasting Life is a logical necessity for man; and Scripture, as I have shown, confirms this belief.

I have purposely called this "A Speculation." It seems to me to be a very reasonable speculation. Even if not a reasonable speculation, it is at least an entrancing dream and always a great consolation.

But for myself, it is a dream that I believe is credible, and more likely to be realized than not. At all events,

it comforts my very soul and makes me eager to discover whether it is only "the stuff that dreams are made of" or an Eternal Verity.

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